

# LANDSCAPE DESIGN

### Introduction

Improvements made around a home or a public building benefit the individual, the family and the community.

A beautifully and functionally landscape property doesn't just happen. It is the result of careful planning. The yard and buildings together make a home. Outside areas need to be planned to provide more living space. We can't afford to waste the "backyard"; we must take advantage of this space for outdoor living.

Traffic is too noisy and fast for us to enjoy sitting on a front porch and watching it. We want privacy from the busy roads and streets and have replaced the front porch with secluded private areas, outdoor living rooms, terraces, patios and similar units. Convenient connecting lines should be used to blend the indoor and outdoor units into a pleasing composite.

Long range plans can be made so that everything will fit into an overall design. Seldom can the whole scheme be developed at once – but it should not be planned in "piece-mail" fashion. Good planning should result in the fullest use and enjoyment of those concerned with the property. Simplicity is the key to good design. Labor is high and scarce; well-planned gardens are being designed with maintenance as a very important factor. Plantings can be made now from the greatest assortment of plant materials ever available to the gardener-designer. We must be critically discriminating in our choice.

What are current trends in landscape design? A few are:

1. Location of living units of house in conjunction with private areas of property.
2. Attempt in subdivisions to locate noisy and quiet sides of adjacent properties together and to separate noisy and quiet areas in individual properties.
3. In newer homes, higher foundations have disappeared but foundation plantings have persisted in many instances.
4. More hard-surfaced areas – parking, walks, and recreational.
5. Greater need for off-street parking and other planned parking,
6. Greater consideration of the adaptability of house and landscape features to topography. Fitting of spreading or ranch-style house in woods on rolling terrain.
7. Elimination of front porch and use of terrace and patio in more secluded spot.
8. Elimination of elaborate flower beds and formal garden with the greater use of flowering trees, shrubs and open lawn areas.
9. Greater choice of available plant materials with designers making a greater effort to utilize natural form of plant.
10. Fewer informal borders of massed shrubs and stereotyped "foundation" plantings using small evergreen globes connecting upright junipers or arbovitae at the corners; more use of specimen plants surrounded by masses of dwarf or ground cover plants or by attractive mineral or vegetable mulches.
11. Demand for more quality in plant material. Each plant selected for what it can

\*Professor of Horticulture, Horticulture Department, Auburn University, Auburn, Alabama.

contribute in the limited space allowed in the garden. There is a greater need for dwarf plants.

12. Greater use of container culture to extend planting season the year around.

### Theory of Landscape Design

Landscape design is concerned with the development of property for use and beauty. For general home usage we practically expand landscape design into landscape gardening.

"Art of landscape gardening is the planning, planting and maintenance of the small home grounds for the use and enjoyment of man – the family unit. Planning, planting and maintenance are just as essential for full usage of public buildings."

### Planning

Plan for utility and attractiveness. Carefully made plans should be available before starting the landscape development. Analyze the requirements first; what is needed and desired?

1. Careful survey of area and its surroundings should be made.
  - A. Existing trees
  - B. Natural outcropping of rocks or other features
  - C. Location of attractive and unattractive objects on or off property
  - D. Topography and possible orientation
  - E. Consideration of personal desires of family
2. Division of property into three major areas: Size determined by size of property and personal desires of the family.
  - A. Front or Semi-public

This is the area in front of the home. It is open to the public and serves as foreground for house; generally best to develop as open lawn with trees to enframe house front areas somewhat wider than deep are generally most pleasing on small properties. Front areas are generally restricted to save space for other areas.
  - B. Private

This is the portion developed to meet outside recreational activity requirements or desires of family. It usually consists of major portion of property and may include flower gardens, open lawn areas, and outdoor living sections to either side or rear of house; generally used related closely to interior private units. It may be developed formally or informally. Formal is generally best for small properties. Informal is generally best on larger, sloping properties containing large trees and other features of an informal nature. In limited space it is often necessary to use same area for several purposes. All parts of private area should be enclosed to screen from public view. Partially separate the various units. Think of various areas as "rooms".
  - C. Service

This is developed in conjunction with kitchen, garage and service units of house. It should include facilities for servicing house (walks and drives), garbage, drying yard, fuel, storage, poultry yard, dog run, vegetable garden, and/or fruit orchard. It also often includes children's play pen in full view of kitchen windows.

3. Make preliminary plan (rough sketch). Discuss with family or persons concerned. Clarify understanding prior to final plans.

Preliminary plan should show buildings, walks, drives, areas, plants and other things involved. Driveways and walks have no set design. Curves or straight lines depend upon the contours of the yard and distances. Usually in the case of short distances, a straight line is best unless there is a tree or some object to curve around.

- A. Use cross-section paper
- B. Select a scale to work with; one inch equals 10 or 20 feet – suggested each small block on cross-section paper equals 1 foot.
- C. Measure boundary lines and indicate on map. Indicate or locate reference.
- D. Indicate doors, windows, steps of house, keep a picture for easy reference.
- E. Orient and show North-south line on plan.
- F. Rough in front, service, and private areas; then refine.
- G. Indicate improvements and changes to be made. Show trees and shrubs as circles drawn to scale size of mature plant. Use overlays of tracing paper. Try several solutions before deciding which design is preferred.

4. Make final planning plan with planting plan incorporated or closely attached. Decide on procedure for development.

Now, let's hurry on to a few planting design thoughts.

### Planting Design

1. General

Planting is intended to enhance architecture, not hide or compete with it. Vines can soften its lines; plant and ground covers can create a base for it; and trees can frame it.

- A. Practically to solve problems such as ground covers, erosion control, wind brakes, screens, shade.
- B. Pictorially to create pictures – the garden vista, a terminal feature, a glade.
- C. Sentimentally to recall an emotion – the rock garden, an old-fashioned garden, a memory garden.

Unity & Harmony	are obtained by the application of the principles	Simplicity Balance Scale Sequence Focalization	Applied to the plant factors	Color Texture Mass
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Design in color must be harmonious within itself and its surroundings. Use texture in broad masses and simply. Simplicity and directness in the use of mass, good relationship of scale, good equilibrium or balance, gradation of interest and focalization of the interest in some climax point are the secrets that lead to fine effects in the use of line and form and mass.

The size, form, texture and color of a plant will affect its potential landscape usage. The relation between ultimate size and rate of growth influence the character of plants as living and changing design material. We must consider plant arrangements that are suitable now and that mature in 15-20 years or longer.

Form may be expressed in many ways: formal-informal; spreading-upright; regular-irregular; as to actual shape – round, conical, spreading, pyramidal, vase, etc. and as to size form ground cover; vine, shrub; small, medium large tree. Plants often change in form as they age.

Texture variations in plant materials are relative, endless and changing. Relative to other plants and to structures, texture is the degree of fineness or coarseness. Small lace-like shrubs often should be used with delicate moldings and fine textured building materials such as brick and small boards. Usually coarse textured plants should be used with stone and concrete blocks. Emphasis can be placed on a certain spot by a definite change in texture.

The purer and stronger the color we introduce into the landscape, whether in plants or structures, the more carefully we must consider its quantity and relation to the other color elements around it.

#### Foundation or Base Planting – (items to consider)

Usually a house needs some plants to blend it into its surroundings. Many well-designed buildings are ruined by over crowded and over growth shrub plantings. Each house is an individual problem.

Plantings should be planned to bring out good features and cover up the bad. Generally, the entrance should be kept dominant and the corners should be softened with a plant that matures at 2/3 the height of the corner. The appearance of the house can be greatly changed by the skillful use of plant materials.

#### Border Plantings

Borders consist of groupings of shrubs at the edge of the property or as a division between areas.

The border planting is used as a background to set off a garden as a unit, to screen out undesirable views and to provide privacy.

The shrub can be used architecturally in the same manner as a fence or wall. Here you or the home owner can put in as many of the "collection plants as you desire.

A good border should show:

1. Variation in skyline.

2. Variation in depth.
3. Interesting combination of flower, fruit and fall color.
4. Balanced seasonal effect.
5. Hedges, fences with vines, or walls may be used in place of/or the supplement the shrub border.

### Plant Selection

At least three factors should be considered in selecting a shrub for a particular location, the soil, exposure, and landscape use.

### Planting

Priority in the development of the average landscape:

- A. Establishment of lawn as a conservation measure.
- B. Location and planting of trees.
- C. Base and/or foundation of plantings.
- D. Border and screen plantings.
- E. Refinements of all plantings.

Shrubs in foundation and border planting should normally be placed  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{2}{3}$  of their mature height apart. In general, this spacing can also be used as a house to plant distance.

Vine and ground-cover type plants may be placed closer to house walls.

### Maintenance

Proper landscape planning and planting will result in easier maintenance. Maintenance problems for home grounds include mulching, watering, fertilizing, pruning, insect and disease prevention and/or control.

Preplan for prevention of insects and diseases. Generally at least one dormant and one growing season spraying are necessary as preventatives. Consider plants selected and possible insects and diseases that might be damaging. Also, one needs to practice cleanliness.

Soak plant bed areas thoroughly when water is needed. Approximately 1 inch of rainfall or irrigation is needed weekly during the growing season.

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